

muddles through the volume, but any expectation for an overarching conceptual frame or even a final interpretative conclusion is in vain. Instead, the book examines a range of issues but lacks focus and does not sufficiently situate the trials in the global history of genocide or even in the context of World War I. (Gary Bass' succinct, though less rigorous, study, *Stay the Hand of Vengeance: The Politics of War Crimes Tribunals* [Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2001], offers such an overview.) Nevertheless, a useful reference book of this kind was long overdue, and *Judgment at Istanbul* will prove indispensable for any student of the Armenian genocide.

JUAN ROMERO, *The Iraqi Revolution of 1958: A Revolutionary Quest for Unity and Security* (Lanham, Md.: University Press of America, 2011). Pp. 265. \$67.00 cloth, \$36.99 paper.

REVIEWED BY ALINE SCHLAEPFER, Department of Arabic Studies, University of Geneva, Geneva, Switzerland; e-mail: aline.schlaepfer@unige.ch
doi:10.1017/S0020743812001559

The Iraqi Revolution of 1958: A Revolutionary Quest for Unity and Security by Juan Romero aims at answering the question of whether the overthrow of the Hashimite monarchy in July 1958 constituted a proper revolution. The author convincingly concludes that "a revolutionary situation developed in Iraq over the period 1948 to 1958 and that the events of July 14, 1958 were the initial phase of a social, political, economic, and psychological revolution" (p. xv). Three main points lead him to this conclusion. First, the military coup was supported by the majority of the population. Second, considering the strong ties between Qasim, the Free Officers, and various civilian forces, the coup cannot be said to be strictly military in nature. Third, in addition to a new foreign policy, the Qasimite regime introduced domestic, political, economic, and social changes that "constituted such a radical departure from those of the Nuri regime that they can be termed a revolution" (p. 214).

The book is divided into eleven short chapters, plus an introduction and conclusion. In Chapters 1 through 5, Romero introduces the main opponents of Nuri al-Sa'id's regime, some of whom became leading actors of the 1958 revolution, as well as the numerous political mistakes of Nuri. In Chapters 6 to 11, Romero emphasizes the circumstances that led to the success of Qasim's "plot" (p. 109) and, ultimately, to a proper revolution, by first examining the interactions of the revolution's leaders with popular forces and then the new regime's attempt to introduce political and agrarian reforms. He also investigates international reactions to the overthrow of the monarchy, arguing subtly that, despite the initial suspicions of Western powers and of their Baghdad Pact allies (Turkey, Iran, and Pakistan) toward the new regime, their consensual recognition of the Republic of Iraq within a few weeks only provides additional evidence that the events of 14 July constituted a proper revolution. In fact, realizing that Qasim's political maneuver was supported by most political parties and the majority of the population, Western powers quickly decided not to intervene. They instead recognized the Republic of Iraq less than three weeks after 14 July. The Baghdad Pact allies similarly expressed their intention to provide recognition of the new regime, which came on 31 July.

The organization of the book is well balanced, as the first half is devoted to the origins of the revolution and the second half to its consequences. This structure invites the reader to see continuity between two periods of Iraqi history that are, alas, too often divided in the historiography. To be more specific, the symmetry Romero draws between the two most important political figures of pre-Ba'thist Iraq (Nuri al-Sa'id and 'Abd al-Karim Qasim), without drawing a careless comparison between the two, contributes to a better understanding

of the rise of the Ba'ṯh Party. In fact, together with three opposition parties, including the Istiqlal Party, the National Democratic Party, and the Iraqi Communist Party, the Ba'ṯh Party founded the United National Front, which became a leading opposition party against Nuri. However, despite the Ba'ṯhists' assistance during the coup, Qasim's continuous disregard of their political interests encouraged them to lend their support to Qasim's first rival, 'Abd al-Salam 'Arif, who became the most serious threat to his authority. 'Arif and the Ba'ṯhists emphasized the necessity for an immediate union (*wiḥda fawriyya*) with the United Arab Republic (UAR) formed in 1958. By doing so, they quickly won the support of the Pan-Arabists. Qasim, however, insisted on the sovereignty of Iraq by advocating the principle of *waṭaniyya*, an Iraqi nationalism, because he feared that joining the UAR would turn Iraq into a province ruled from Cairo, and he ultimately outmaneuvered 'Arif. The isolation resulting from this political move eventually contributed to his fall.

Romero also deconstructs various clichés conveyed by apologists of both the monarchical period and Qasim's regime. For instance, by investigating the killings of the royal family in the Rihab Palace and the mobilization of mobs in Chapter 7, the author shows evidence rejecting the assertion that "the demonstrators had evil intentions" (p. 119) against foreigners and the royal family. He notably discusses a report by the American Embassy in Baghdad on August 7, stating that "mob violence" was rather limited and that there was no looting or attacks on minority groups (p. 120). By scrutinizing the reports of eyewitnesses, American and British actors, Romero thus conclusively de-demonizes the actors of the revolution. At the same time, his reading of the underlying reasons for the success of Qasim's plot against Nuri aims at demystifying Qasim's heroism and political victory. For instance, by placing Qasim's strategic move within the context of numerous aborted coups by Free Officers in Chapter 6, Romero underlines the leader's undemocratic intentions. He states that "Qasim's disregard for the democratic procedure to present his third plot to the Supreme Committee for discussion" (p. 110) was due to his lack of trust in his Free Officer colleagues.

Romero's systematic deconstruction of pro- and anti-Qasimite narratives is made possible by the broad and valuable array of sources in Arabic and English (American and British official sources, newspapers, and memoirs) on which he relies. The research is therefore extremely well documented with regard to Iraq's domestic and foreign policies. In terms of his account of the genesis of the revolution, however, the reader is sometimes left feeling that political and public responses to Nuri's regime are not sufficiently taken into account, from a historical point of view. While demonstrating the importance of leftist and nationalist movements such as the Iraqi Communist Party and the Ba'ṯh Party, his research nevertheless tends to belittle the influence of other Iraqi opposition circles in the public sphere. For instance, the Ahali group, formed by leftist intellectuals in the 1930s, had a major political influence on the regime after the *inqilāb* of 1936. In a similar vein, when five political parties were officially recognized in 1946 (the National Unity Party—Hizb al-Ittihad al-Watani; the People's Party—Hizb al-Sha'b; the National Democratic Party—Hizb al-Watani al-Dimuqrati; the Liberal Party—Hizb al-Ahrar; and the Independence Party—Hizb al-Istiqlal), the first three were created and supported by Ahali members. In the long run, these opposition circles had a strong impact on the formation of a public opinion against Nuri's regime, mainly through their active presses, in which they openly expressed their positions. By emphasizing the Nuri government's constant repression of the population, Romero minimizes the impact of the mounting political opposition on public opinion. Yet how to explain the anger of "the majority of the crowds" (p. 125) against the Hashimite regime—one of Romero's central premises—without admitting the existence of a political opposition in the public sphere? In other words, the "Iraqi political street," in the words of the Iraqi poet Muhammad Mahdi al-Jawahiri (*Dhikrayati*, vol. 2 [Damascus: Dar al-Rafidayn, 1998], 15), is central to understanding the collapse of the Hashimite Kingdom.

This study is a major contribution to research on the contemporary history of Iraq. It will be indispensable to scholars of Iraqi history as well as historians working on U.S. foreign policy in the Middle East. By tackling the issue of the revolutionary nature of the events of 14 July 1958, Romero also provides historical tools that could be applied to other case studies in the Middle East, such as Egypt and Libya. In that sense, he leaves the door open to further research on monarchical overthrows in the Arab Middle East.

BASSAM HADDAD, *Business Networks in Syria: The Political Economy of Authoritarian Resilience*, Stanford Studies in Middle Eastern and Islamic Societies and Cultures (Palo Alto, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 2011). Pp. 280. \$45.00 cloth, \$24.95 paper, \$24.95 e-book.

REVIEWED BY SAMER N. ABBOD, Department of Historical and Political Studies, Arcadia University, Glenside, Pa.; e-mail: abbouds@arcadia.edu
doi:10.1017/S0020743812001560

There have been a number of excellent books addressing Syria's political economy during the era of Ba'thist rule but very few with the theoretical range, historical sensitivity, and substantive depth of *Business Networks in Syria*. In this solid contribution, Haddad attempts to explain poor economic performance in Syria through the analytical framework of networks, which he defines as "informal institutional agency with limited autonomy" (p. 14) that is produced through the interactions of bureaucrats, entrepreneurs, and the coercive apparatuses of the state. For Haddad, networks began to emerge in the 1970s out of specific political calculations by the political elite that privileged regime security and stability over economic development. He convincingly argues that the formation of networks under these security calculations leads to political-economic patterns that have negative impacts on the development prospects of the economy as a whole. Covering the period 1986 to 2005, Haddad successfully unravels the dialectical relationship between networks and their larger sociopolitical contexts. He attempts to explain two related phenomena in Syria: state-business relations and the impact of these relations on political-economic outcomes.

Haddad identifies three variables that have shaped Syria's political economy: state-business mistrust, external rent, and the absence of checks on the Syrian regime's power. While the impacts of the last two are developed in the relevant literature, Haddad's analysis of the first variable introduces a new explanatory framework to understand political-economic change that is neither state- nor society-centric. By positing state-business mistrust as a critical factor, Haddad rejects normative explanations of Syria's political economy that tend to emphasize formal indicators of economic change, such as policy reform. Mistrust emerged due to sociohistorical and political factors, including sectarian calculations and urban/rural divisions. The historical reasons for tension and mistrust between the wielders of economic and of political power were further aggravated by the specific forms of incorporation that the regime employed to bring entrepreneurs "back in" and help to explain the pragmatic calculations of regime officials in trying to cultivate a business class subservient to their interests as well as the challenges of doing so.

It is within this context of state-business mistrust that the private sector grew and developed under Ba'thist rule, a trajectory that Haddad treats with considerable nuance. In detailing the stratification of the private sector across a range of markers, including its social origins, position vis-à-vis the regime, economic orientation, and institutional expression, he demonstrates how the private sector's agency and autonomy was circumscribed by the regime and made subservient to its political imperatives. The populist-authoritarian regime needed to